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WOMEN AS ADMIRERS OF CATTIE

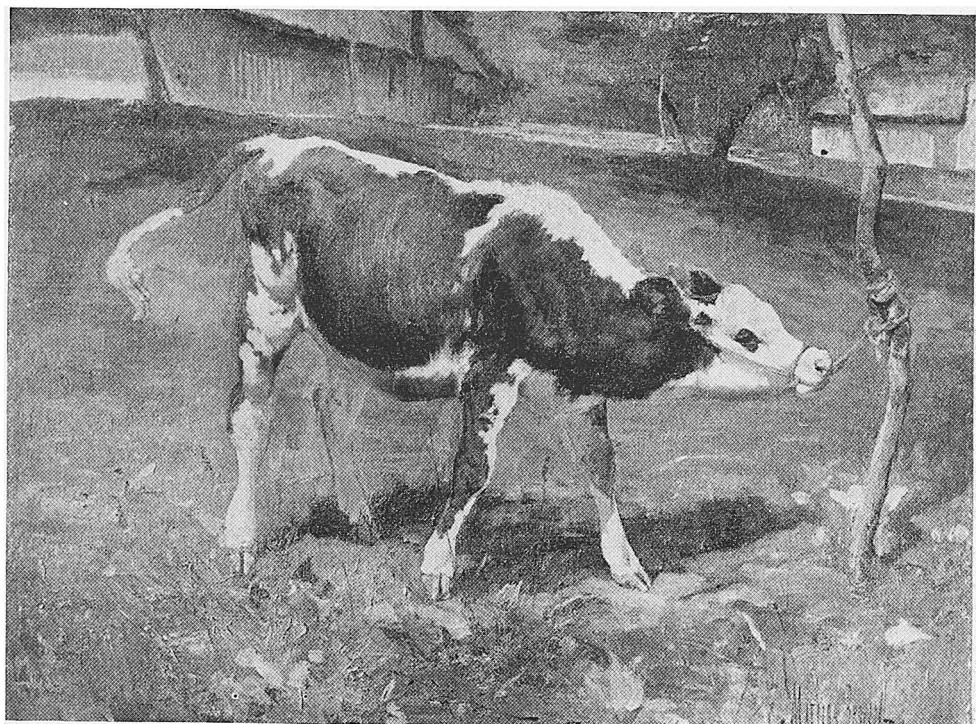
BY PHILIP G. HUBERT, JR.

With original illustrations by Matilda Browne.

WHEN one finds a woman painting cattle, and painting them well, it is but natural to attribute to Rosa Bonheur some of the influence underlying this choice of an artistic field. In truth, it is no exaggeration to say that probably nine-tenths of the women-artists who attempt animal-painting to-day owe their incentive to this remarkable Frenchwoman who, more than fifty years ago, began to send pictures of sheep and goats to the Paris Salon.

When Rosa Bonheur began to paint, women were less in evidence as art and literary workers than they are now, and, as may be imagined, her work aroused no end of comment and criticising, owing to its author's sex; we find this hard to understand to-day when, if there is anything that woman has not experimented upon, she will be glad to know of it, in order to attempt it at once.

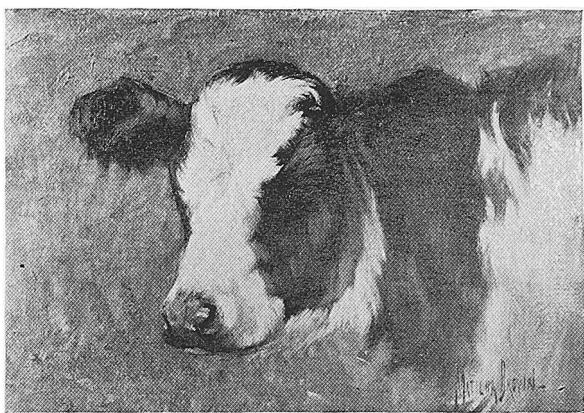
Perhaps the very opposition and sour criticism that Rosa Bonheur met with at the beginning of her career, had much to do with the unconventional note in dress and bearing that has characterized her after-life. Who, that has studied the lines of her fine, thoughtful face, can have failed to observe the somewhat sorrowful expression around the eyes? It may be a trace of those early days, when life was to her a battle. Upon the other hand, her mouth shows the strength of character needed for successfully struggling against troubles within and odds without.



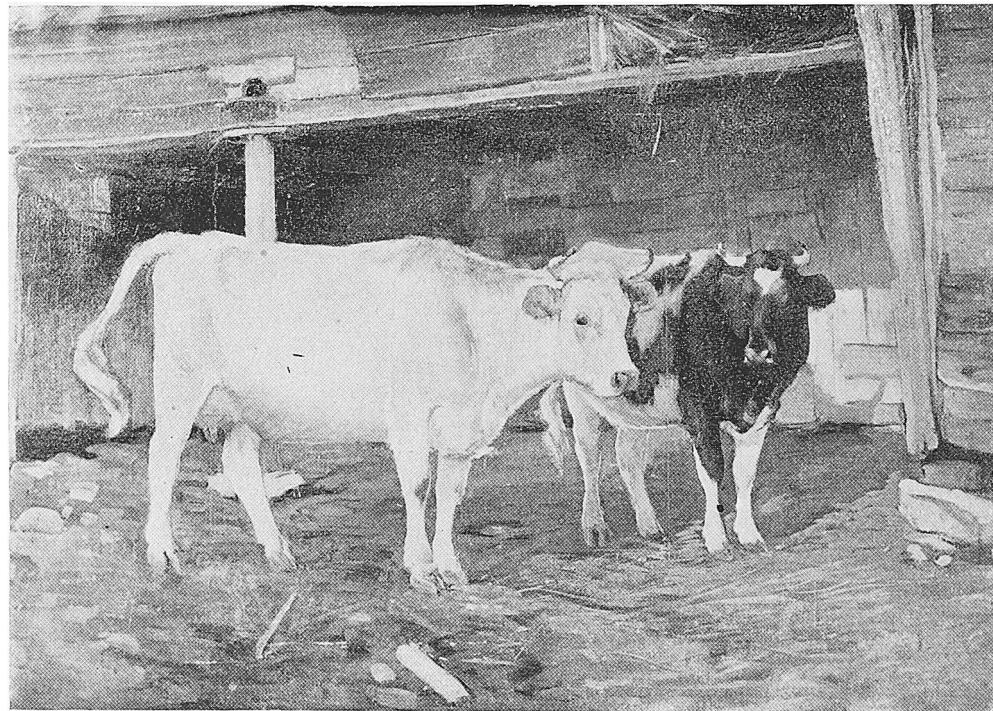
THE UNWILLING MODEL

It may be noted in passing that the man's blouse, the trousers that Rosa Bonheur occasionally adopted, and her big cow-hide boots, undoubtedly seemed to her necessities for an artist whose chief subjects were found in stock-yards, paddocks, and fields. "An artist who paints cattle," said Rosa Bonheur once, "sometimes has to get out of the way of an indignant model in a hurry, and I could never run in petticoats."

The most enthusiastic admirer, by the way, that Mlle Bonheur found in this country, was a woman, and one also devoted to cattle. I mean the late Miss "Middy" Morgan, who for twenty years wrote the best report of the cattle-market printed by the New York newspapers. Miss Morgan's work-day began at five o'clock in the morning, when, dressed in short skirts and shod with heavy boots, she reached New York by the first boat from Staten Island, where she lived, and crossed over to the stock-yards at Hoboken. Her tall, gaunt, ill-dressed figure was a familiar spectacle to passengers on the early Staten Island boats. Until noon Miss Morgan tramped around the stock-yards, sometimes through mud several inches



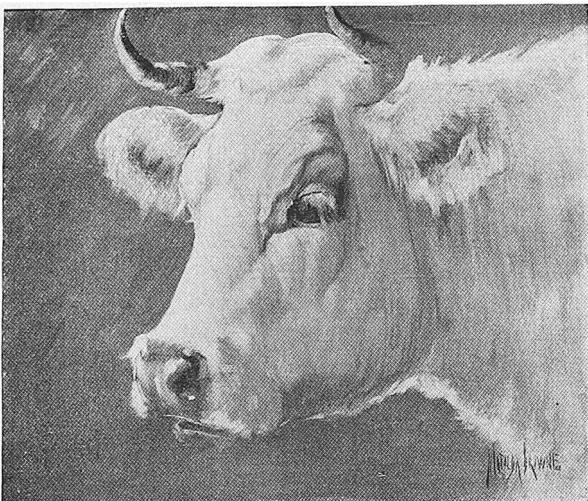
A YOUNG PHILOSOPHER



IN WINTER QUARTERS

thick, gathering the facts for her report. No dealer could deceive her as to the quality of his stock. Miss Morgan made her own estimate of an animal's worth, prodding the beast in the sides with an ancient umbrella, in order to test the quality of the meat.

It is, perhaps, not strange that this singular woman should have appreciated to the full Rosa Bonheur's remarkable faculty for putting live cattle, and not stuffed ones, upon canvas. Twice I have seen Miss Morgan sitting in ecstatic contemplation before the famous "Horse Fair," which, since 1853, has been one of the most noted of modern paintings, and is now one of the glories of our Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is strange, however, that while Miss Morgan would wave aside vicious cows with her umbrella, and was not even afraid of a bull, she was des-



THE LADY IN WHITE



SHEEP IN THE CLEARING

perately afraid of burglars. In the little house where she and her sister lived, there were no stairs to the second story; there was only a ladder, which the two women pulled up after them when they went up to bed. And Miss Morgan once confided to me that she had a number of cannon-balls stored on the second floor, which she could drop on the head of the burglar bold enough to break in below.

Miss Matilda Browne, some reproductions of whose clever animal-pictures accompany these notes, or rather to which these notes are offered by way of accompaniment, is uncommonly successful, as will be seen, in giving life to her cattle. One can feel the nervous tug at the rope that ties "*An Unwilling Captive*" to the sapling; and there is a genuine barnyard flavor about the cows in "*Winter Quarters*." Another quality, and one not always present, even in good representations of cattle, is the interesting and harmonious background that Miss Browne gives her groups. There is atmosphere of no mean order about "*Sheep in the Clearing*," so that here we have good landscape-painting as well as a picturesque flock of sheep.

The picture entitled "*In the Lane*," will make envious many a country-lover



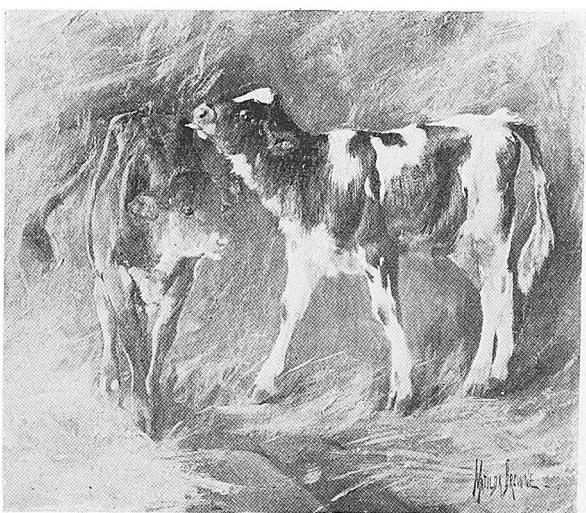
IN THE LANE

doomed to pass nineteen-twentieths of his life between city walls. This is far from the madd'ing crowd with a vengeance. The stolid oxen, the moss-grown barns, the old stone wall, and even the fowls in the foreground, all speak of quiet peace and contentment. The picture would make a good text for an essay or poem upon the blessings of a country life.

Indeed, is not that the best effect which such pictures as these have upon

those who look at them with large appreciation, seeing somewhat more than merely the technical excellence they manifest? It is noticeable in all galleries and exhibitions, that, while an excited group, constantly changing, may cluster around pictures of action, and admirers are to be found for genre and historical compositions, and all the rest, yet fine studies of rural incidents, like these drawn by Miss Browne, hold the steady gaze of quiet sitters. Consciously or unconsciously their minds are refreshed by such sweet reminders of the green and growing fields that bloom and are fragrant outside the noisy town; and the brain takes repose from contemplation of the large-eyed, imperturbable cattle, at peace with the world, a part of the tranquility of satisfied nature.

Most New Yorkers who frequent picture-shows do not need the figure-piece entitled "Industry," to remind them that Miss Browne does not confine herself to animal-painting. This artist has shown to the public many portraits.



COMRADES



INDUSTRY



E. J. POYNTER, R. A.



SIR JOHN GILBERT, R. A.